NOTES FROM THE:

Auditor General of the Air Force

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AFAA Role in the Air Force Y2K Program

As you know, January 1, 2000 will be a big day for computer systems around the world. On this day, we will begin learning whether industry and government efforts to fix the "millennium bug" or Year 2000 (Y2K) problem were successful. The pervasiveness of Air Force computer systems has made the Y2K issue of paramount importance. Both DoD and the Air Force have made Y2K an operational readiness issue. Further, both the Acting Secretary and the Chief of Staff have tasked all commanders to make resolving Y2K a top priority.

AFAA Involvement

Over the past 3 years, we have worked closely with Air Force officials to address the Y2K problem. To date, we have completed 10 projects that reviewed various Y2K issues. Partnering with our customers, we believe these efforts have assisted the Air Force management team in promptly identifying, reporting, and resolving many Y2K issues. These projects ranged from validating the support for Y2K correction status of Air Force mission critical and mission essential systems, including feeder systems for Defense Finance and Accounting Service pay and accounting systems, to assessing whether bases can continue operations should Y2K disruptions occur.

Modified Approach

Responding to the fast pace of Y2K activity, we accelerated our own processes for evaluating and reporting on this important issue. Specifically, we performed these projects as Management Advisory Services (MAS) engagements so that we could provide timely results to senior level managers. Further, we kept all Air Force management levels apprised of our Y2K efforts by providing weekly status reports. These updates allowed senior Air Force leaders to have independent, objective, and current information about potential problems. In addition to weekly updates, the MAS team briefed the results at major commands and HQ USAF within 2-3 weeks of completing each segment of fieldwork.

Results

We have devoted considerable resources to working the Y2K effort and believe the results have paid dividends. The Acting Secretary, Director of Communications and Information, and the Chief of the Y2K Program have expressed support for our efforts and requested additional work. Additionally, several major commands have asked for expanded coverage and follow-up work to ensure their bases adequately addressed issues or implemented suggested corrective actions. Further, AFAA personnel have participated on Tiger Teams and staff assistance visits to address specific problems. Finally, we have briefed our MAS results quarterly at worldwide Y2K conferences.

Air Force Response

The Air Force has responded to the Y2K issue with great effort, concern, and commitment. AFAA's residency concept facilitated our ability to contribute to the Air Force effort. For example, we provided independent assessments of Y2K progress at 70 locations in only a 6-week span. AFAA personnel visited places such as Greenland, Alaska, Korea, and the Azores to verify that appropriate actions were taken. In addition, we provided assurance that installation status reports forwarded to higher headquarters contained accurate data.

Conclusion

Overall, the Y2K initiative offered another occasion to strengthen working relationships and enhance teamwork between AFAA, major commands, and Air Force senior leaders. By using our MAS program, we provided useful and timely information to help Air Force functional personnel identify and fix installation problems worldwide. We were pleased with the opportunity to help Air Force managers in meeting Y2K challenges and expect to continue assisting with other information technology issues. FM